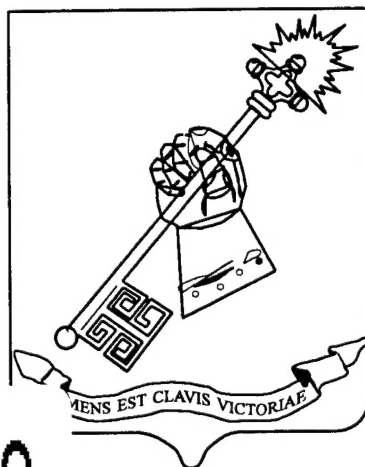


# INFANTRYPERSONS

A Monograph  
By  
Major Lester W. Knotts  
Infantry



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## ABSTRACT

INFANTRYPERSONS by MAJ Lester W. Knotts, USA, 47 pages.

Currently, law and policy preclude women in American armed forces from serving in ground combat duty positions. This monograph discusses both the trend to reverse the combat exclusion policies and the opportunity which currently exists to try integrating women into the United States Army Infantry. Should the U.S. national leadership mandate that women be fully included in every military occupational specialty, Army leaders can be prepared with an effective integration plan. That plan involves introducing women at each level of command within the brigade from rifle squad member through platoon leadership to brigade staff officer--simultaneously. Implementation could be exercised in peace time at the Army's own pace. Rushing the process will increase the potential for loss of unit cohesion and risks a decrease in combat effectiveness.

The monograph first examines available published and unpublished literature on women in ground combat positions and positions proximate to ground combat to assess physical and mental potential for females to execute ground combat duties. A local survey of female CGSC officers examined current attitudes among professionally competitive officers concerning desire to serve in ground combat--specifically in the infantry. Attitude survey data and physical testing are compiled and presented in graphic form to show that some women can, and some women want, to serve as ground combatants. The overlap of the two groups are infantry candidates.

Conclusions are that minimum physical standards for service in Infantry Branch would maximize potential for increasing combat effectiveness while allowing the most capable soldiers of both sexes to contribute to the ground fight. Physical screening criteria might include load-carrying, running, jumping, and digging tasks along with existing mental aptitude minimums. Application of the standards would determine the branch gender mix. Current attitudes suggest that the time may be optimal to include women in the infantry. Overcoming the residual intellectual and cultural resistance to women as combat leaders is a subject for further study.

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Women. We can't fight with them, and we can't fight without them. In every armed conflict that the U.S. has engaged, women have been ramming home powder charges and squeezing off rounds, even when they had to don the guise of men to do so. As if in tribute to that legacy, the U.S. Army has, since 1982, authorized women to serve in 92 percent of all officer, warrant officer, and enlisted specialties.<sup>1</sup> What about the rest of those specialties--the other 8 percent? Those military occupational specialties are in the ground combat arms, where physical strength, male bonding, and great risk of capture have kept Infantry, Armor, Special Forces, cannon Artillery, and Combat Engineer specialties the exclusive domain of men.

Army policy, not civilian mandate, precludes women from serving in positions that involve direct ground combat. Current U.S. Army policy is that women can serve in any job except specialties, positions, or units of battalion size or smaller which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat.<sup>2</sup> The larger concern for the military is whether all male units can fight more effectively than a mix of males and females doing the same combat missions. If a gender blend is more efficient, then the services cannot afford to maintain exclusion policies. For their own good, and for the sake of the nation, national defense ought to optimize all resources. Though it is trite to say so, most leaders agree that people are the greatest asset. And in the Army there are two kinds of people, female and male.

For the Air Force and Navy, Title 10 of U.S. Code was formerly the basis for excluding women from serving aboard aircraft or combat sailing vessels. In the early 1980s General Edward Meyer established the Women in the Army Policy Review Group, known as WITA. WITA considered physical capabilities and combat exclusion. Because of the way battle had evolved in its nonlinear form, the group either had to admit that women were already in combat

roles, or they had to come up with a system for coding those positions which women would not be allowed to fill. The result was the Direct Combat Position Coding, or DCPC.<sup>3</sup> To be consistent with sister service policy, the Army created DCPC--but the policies have changed upon which DCPC was based. Since 1983, the policy framed in Army Regulation 600-13 describes which army jobs pose the highest risk of direct ground combat by coding them P1 (closed to women), or P2 (open to women).

Direct [ground] combat means closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, and shock effect to destroy or capture that enemy. It means using individual or crew-served weapons to repel enemy attacks by fire, close combat, or counterattack while being exposed to hostile fire. And it means a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel.<sup>4</sup> A code of P1, for example, applies to duty in an infantry squad whose mission is to close with and destroy the enemy by direct fire and maneuver. A P2 job on the Army Staff in the District of Columbia would place a soldier furthest out of harm's way.<sup>5</sup> According to Army regulations, then, females cannot have Infantry as a branch.<sup>6</sup>

Following P1/P2 coding, the Defense Authorization Act of 1992 made two amendments: one to repeal the prohibitions against women flying combat aircraft, and a second to establish the President's Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. After waiting for the results of the Commission, and the subsequent directives of then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, the Army made the decision on Wednesday, April 28, 1993, to assign women to attack aircraft.<sup>7</sup> The Secretary also ordered the Navy to assign women to almost all surface ships, but he made it clear at the same time that women were still prohibited from ground combat roles. That comment characterized the prevailing military attitude.

American society has traditionally accepted the position of men as combatants, women as helpers and healers. Even when women were allowed into the military the nation has been unwilling to commit females to the risk or capture and rape that comes with hand-to-hand fighting. Many have been reluctant to risk losing the tradition of the male protector of the female--an enduring social moray. Lack of physical strength is one of the top two reasons why women do not serve in combat specialties (the other being, arguably, male resistance). Also at issue, but not within the scope of this paper, is whether the current policies are discriminatory or in violation of a Constitutional right to fight for the country. Expectations based on gender differences create challenges for hygiene, privacy, and traditional parenting roles, especially in cases of sole parenthood. Significant to this examination is that using gender to eliminate a potential pool of collective personal talent from productive service to the nation may be unnecessarily inefficient.

More opposition to women in combat roles stems from the intangible but extremely powerful traditions and social attitudes mentioned above, to the calculable expenses of modifying billets and adjusting standard equipment to fit the smaller and lighter soldiers who will be expected to use it. Despite all the reasons why women cannot or should not join the ground fight, the trend is toward inclusion. Several decisions in the last fifteen years suggest that women will ultimately be allowed--or even required--to fight the direct ground combat fight. Presaging this trend was former Commander-in-Chief Ronald Reagan. He signed the executive order revising the Code of Conduct, instituted in the 1940s by General Eisenhower, which many soldiers memorize as the model for soldierly behavior in war. The Code is a benchmark for how to act during the fight, and in case of capture. The Code originally began with "I am an

American fighting man. I serve in the forces which guard my country and our way of life . . . I am prepared to give my life in their defense." The Code now begins and ends with the gender-neutral words "I am an American. I serve . . . ." <sup>8</sup> Morays of the 1940s prevailed at the time the Code was written. We are rapidly approaching the Twenty-first Century. Through the shifts of the Sixties and into the negotiations of the Nineties, the political context for exclusion of women as ground combatants has changed.

Debate continues over whether women can or should serve in direct ground combat. There is, however, a pattern to the decisions and actions where women in uniform are concerned. The author's contact with the 1st Engineer Brigade at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri showed the Army experimenting with women in combat engineer bridge companies for almost a year. Engineer branch was previously restricted to men, since soldiers in that specialty fight as infantry when required. The testing at Leonard Wood showed that women can serve on bridge crews, if their proportion is kept low (six or eight women for each crew of seventy). These bridge crew members were not subjected to direct combat as a part of their training, but they would surely stand that risk in performing bridging operations in a combat zone. <sup>9</sup>

There is more evidence of a shift in military thinking. Before 1994, women could not fly Army combat aircraft. Now, all positions in Attack Aviation are now open to women. Women accessed into aviation after 28 April 1993 will be considered eligible to fill army aviation assignment needs. <sup>10</sup> After the 1994 announcement by the Army Chief of Staff, aviation branch hastened to graduate female pilots in the recently prohibited specialty 152F--Apache attack helicopter pilot. Two women had already graduated, and three more were in the transition program at the February 1994 printing of the review. These women are positioned as close as



women can get to face-to-face fighting; AH-64 crews engage enemy aerial or ground forces by direct action either in offensive or defensive operations.<sup>11</sup> With respect to planning for tactical operations, current doctrine says that attack aviation companies are combat maneuver units. This means that there is no longer a prohibition against female aviators serving in positions that involve direct combat. What is next? It may not be a long time before women can be recruited for ground combat as well.

That pattern toward including women in the ground fight can be summed up with this comment by military analyst Kenneth McDonald: "The simple fact that women have performed, and performed well, in positions that just a few years ago would certainly have been considered combat specialties indicates that the momentum of history will eventually open all military roles to women."<sup>12</sup> The potential is real. Service members, as public servants, anticipate the missions forthcoming from the civilian national leadership, advise those leaders creating the missions, prepare, and then comply fully with the letter and spirit of the leaders' intent. In the case of women in ground combat, the Department of Defense advises and anticipates. So far, most of the advice has been to keep women out of the ground fight. But such advice is only a recommendation to the leadership. The commander-in-chief or a cabinet chief for defense in any administration can assume the mantle of championing the cause of full inclusion even if that position is contrary to the advice of the military leaders. The precedent was set with the racial integration of the military around the same time the Code of Conduct was first being distributed.

Knowing the possibilities suggests that more can be done to prepare for the potential inclusion of American women in all Army specialties. If Congress does not decide the issue of female combat integration with legislation, the Supreme Court may have to. Considering the

potential impact on national defense, the Army ought to take the lead and lay out feasible acceptance standards and produce scenarios for future inclusion policy. Precedent for including women in combat training, and thus preparing them for combat has already been set by other government agencies. For example, although few Army women attempt the rigorous Special Forces Qualification Courses, the SF groups have been training women from U.S. Federal agencies for years.<sup>13</sup> The military context for inclusion of women in combat is changing. The Army can prepare for accepting and training women in ground combat roles. This monograph suggests why, and how that might be done.

The U.S. Army is not idle on the issue of involving women in ground combat. Most of the evidence and testimony this author encountered runs contrary to including women in infantry brigades. Now is the time to discuss the branch of the modernization plan where women will be included in rifle squads. The methodology for studying this issue includes examining the current published and unpublished literature concerning women in the armed forces, and examining attitudes and desires of women currently serving through a special research survey. In addition, conversation with managers of Basic and One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Leonard Wood about their results suggests ultimate success is possible when including women in the more physically demanding Army specialties.

Recognizing the potential value to the aviation community, The Army surveyed 353 female warrant and commissioned officers to see how many of that total population would want to train in attack helicopters--103 women had the desire.

Knowing what the aviators were doing, it seemed appropriate to assess the potential pool of female infantry officers. To examine the attitudes of the women in uniform who have been

affected by the change in policy, I distributed eighty short answer surveys to all the U.S. Army women officer students in the 1995-96 Command and General Staff College and School of Advanced Military Studies. Their responses are revealing of an increased appetite for the ardor of combat.

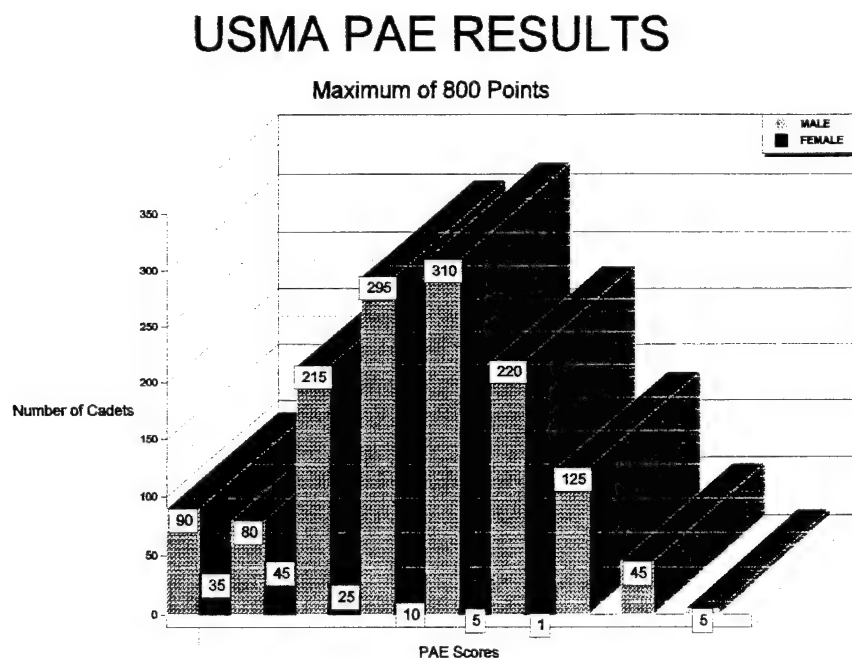
At stake in the inclusion gambit is the combat effectiveness of infantry units. Most military observers and participants would agree that bringing maximum destruction and death to the enemy at the cost of least destruction to friendly units is the reasonable goal of infantry troops committed to conventional combat. Destruction takes strength. Men are 40 to 50 percent stronger than women in the upper body.<sup>14</sup> Because the grunt work of infantry routinely requires soldiers to carry a quarter to greater than a third of their body weight (45 pounds for a rifleman, twenty-plus additional pounds for radio operators and machine gunners) long distances, the quantifiable strength advantage that most men have over most women suggests that the pool of infantry troops should be mostly men--and it is.

With any effort to integrate women into the specialty, some compensation must occur to make up for the physical strength differences. The alternative is to accept degraded mission performance. Two remedies come to mind: gender-neutral specialty standards and teamwork.<sup>15</sup>

Branch and specialty-specific screening criteria have shown up repeatedly in suggestions for improving selection for infantry jobs and other military roles.<sup>16</sup> Criteria already exist for just getting into the army--physical standards of mobility, vision, height, and weight. The U.S. Military Academy even lists severe acne as a screening criterion for admission.<sup>17</sup> Once accessed, soldiers take a battery of mental aptitude tests to discern their individual qualifications for various duties. Generally, a higher score on the Army Standard Vocational Aptitude Battery

(ASVAB) results in a greater number of specialty choices for the incoming soldier.

Unlike intellectual standards, physical standards have been applied less rigorously at accession to determine suitability for particular duty. In fact, recruits who do less well on the ASVAB may find that they are routinely selected for 11B without regard for their physical acumen. The result is that troops can arrive at infantry units and be unprepared for the muscular



*Figure 1. Strength Comparison*

challenges the duty expects. Units place men who cannot attain a minimum standard of physical performance on extra training--marching, running, and strength conditioning. Some men will fail to keep up with the unit--have in fact been set up for failure--because they were not screened for a minimum physical aptitude common to infantry tasks. To characterize the problem for women, consider the 42 percent average advantage men have in upper body strength over

women. Put another way, the top 20 percent of women are roughly equal to the bottom 20 percent of male in terms of lifting and hauling capacity.<sup>18</sup> A 1989 study of 100 women and seventy-five men entering basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina revealed that with an additional three weeks of physical and psychological training, women can increase their physical strength by up to 42 percent from entry measurements. In the Fort Jackson study, no data on endurance was provided, but presumably there were gains in that area as well.<sup>19</sup> An Army Research Institute study conducted on 16-18 year-olds at the U.S. Military Academy does show that men significantly improve in cardiorespiratory fitness at a much greater rate than do women after six weeks of common training. Hormonal changes which occur in men at puberty account for men's ability to increase their already greater work capacity at a rate double that of women--50 percent increases compared to 24 percent for women.<sup>20</sup> The research showed that there were women who could perform at the male mean in each of these studies.

Unfortunately, these top women are statistically already at the near-peak of their performance--only marginal additional increases in their strength would be achieved by even the most rigorous of physical conditioning programs. The bottom 20 percent of the males can make significant increases in performance with a modicum of effort, and because of their physiological composition, bypass the women in strength gains. Ability to increase and sustain strength and endurance is significant for the infantry soldier performing such tasks as marching with sustainment and combat loads, frequent digging, and preparing defensive positions.<sup>21</sup>

These tasks are central to the duties of the highly deployable light infantry that are routinely the first to go to war. For example, the 82nd Airborne and the 101st Air Assault Divisions have their peculiar respective means of air delivery to the battlefield, but once the

troops are on the ground, the supplies for the first two days of combat are strapped to their bodies. Duty in a mechanized division may require more strength on occasion than service in a light division. Helping raise a three hundred-pound ramp when the winch fails, or torquing track bolts involves the use of levers, extensions, and a large measure of strength. Of course, when the ramp goes down, the infantry soldiers clamber out with the hefty combat load to carry out the attack. They use the same running, toting, and digging skills as their dismounted brethren.

Thus, although infantry units have differing priorities based upon anticipated missions and the commander's emphasis, the beginnings of a physical battery of tests for assignment to infantry units--marching, load-carrying, and digging--emerge. As the previous physical comparisons show, most women are not strong enough for infantry duty. Some, however, are. The physical abilities of soldiers should weigh heavily in recruitment decisions, particularly since the ultimate end of the marching, carrying and digging may be hand-to-hand fighting. It is irresponsible to consider placing any soldier in a face-off with an enemy at bayonet range knowing that soldier stands little chance to win the physical contest that is an integral part of the infantry job. Comparative studies show that a small proportion of uniformed women already have the physical strength to do the tasks required in the infantry. With recruitment targeted at the fittest of these women, and additional physical training during entry education, the number of available women should increase.

An alternative to recruiting only the strongest women and increasing the conditioning for others is to incorporate women into the infantry teams and squads in small enough numbers that the stronger members of the element can assist others who need help. Naturally, that sort of help already goes on, and the help, predictably, results in closer cooperation for all tasks. Clearly,

most women have to work harder than most men to accomplish the same amount of work.<sup>22</sup> Even so, the help would not all be males assisting females. Some women would be helping some men carry the medium machine gun or torque a road wheel. The latter scenario suggests the optimum condition: a mix of soldiers is so equitable that every person can contribute materially to the ground attack mission, without the perception that some are unfairly doing less work. That is the goal of a successful integration of women into Infantry branch. The Leonard Wood studies suggest that an optimum number of weaker soldiers, male or female, should not exceed 10 percent.<sup>23</sup> Coincidentally, that number would be consistent with a maximum number of women who are physically eligible and desirous of joining the infantry. As the CGSC Survey results included in this study show, 21 percent of the officers surveyed expressed a desire to join the infantry, but statistically, all of those women would likely not be able to meet a minimum physical strength requirement for service in that branch. It will be difficult in the short term for a volunteer army to fill jobs at greater than 10 percent women in the current force structure of the infantry battalions, companies, and squads. Yet those women who want to serve in the branch could do so effectively in smaller numbers.

Challenges resulting from physical differences between male and female soldiers could be overcome by policy, teamwork or technology. Resolving psychological challenges will require greater problem-solving skill. According to preliminary findings concerning integration of women into the military, the greatest difficulty in working with men in the Army is the prevalent male attitude that women are not the equal of men in military service.<sup>24</sup> Consensus from the female army majors is that there are women already in the profession who have passed up opportunities in the field artillery because of the significant limitations on their career

progression. The women think that would be true in other combat arms if those branches were to come open. The female officers collectively did not want accommodations made for them in any branch.<sup>25</sup> In fact, there were numerous complaints that the female standards on the Army Physical Fitness Test are not challenging enough.<sup>26</sup> Twenty-one of thirty-seven respondents agreed that Infantry should be open to women who want to serve in that branch.<sup>27</sup> Some wanted to join the infantry for a chance to do the principle work of the branch--to close with the enemy directly.

Many more women would have opted for other combat arms, given access and equal footing (no restrictions on duty) with the men. Special Forces seemed particularly appealing. Various respondents noted that women would be ideal for Special Forces, considering the more intuitive and less confrontational character attributed to women.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps it is because of those perceived but unproven character traits that women are currently barred from ground combat. Women might be as proficient as any men at three-second rushes and jumping out of airplanes, but would still face the preconception that women do not belong in bayonet charges. As one Sergeant First Class remarked about female NCOs, who comprise less than 4 percent of the senior NCO corps, the female NCO is never taken as seriously as the male, and the credentials they earn at one assignment are not transferable to subsequent assignments as are those of the men.<sup>29</sup> Women in the infantry will be under the constant stress of having to prove themselves competent. That burden will be present in peace or war. The apparent truth is that in "matters pertaining to organized aggression,"<sup>30</sup> long-standing sex role expectations by Americans mitigate against women being fully accepted as leaders of fighting units. Medical and clerical roles are traditional and acceptable. Women as

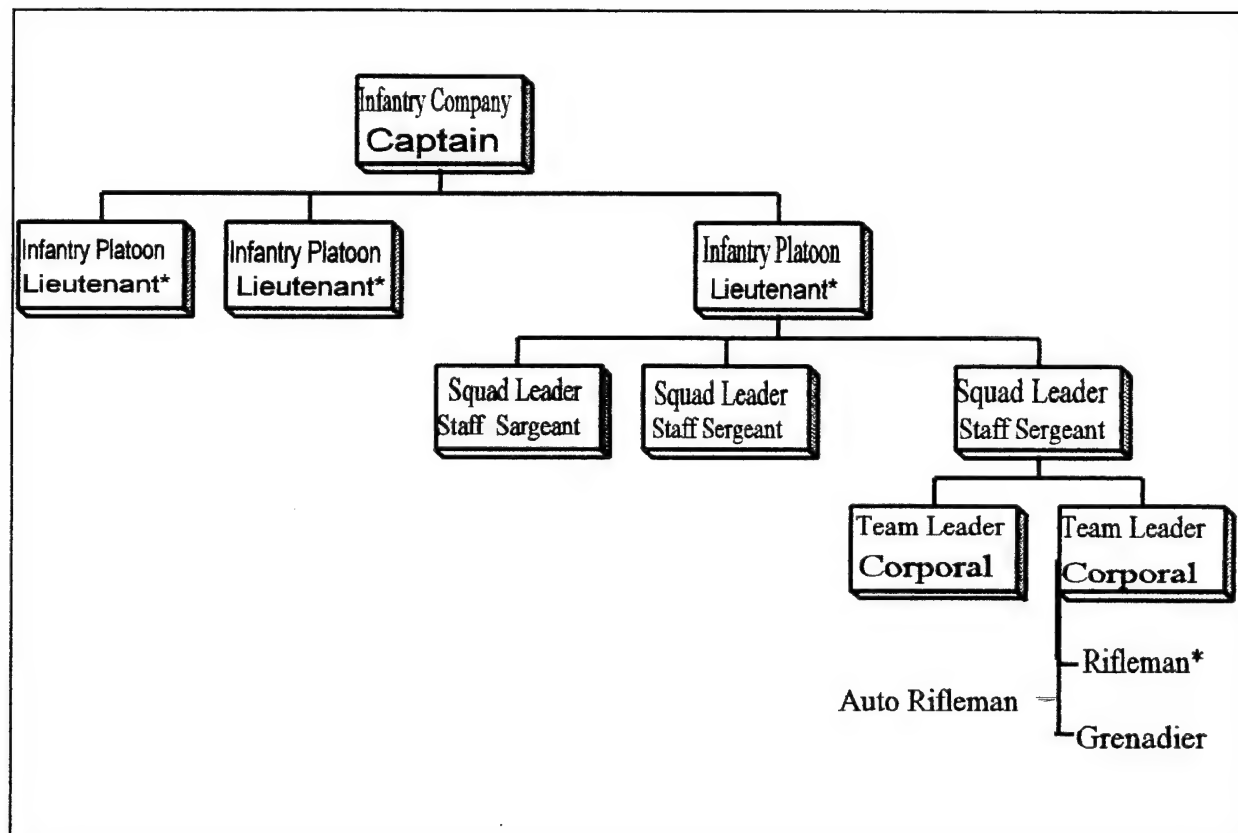


team and squad leaders can expect negative attitudes to prevail from men and women in their charge. The negativism has little to do with ability. Aversion to female leaders comes from sex-role expectations.<sup>31</sup> This is the reason that attitudes are nearly equal barriers to women joining the infantry. Prejudices against women as combatants are deep-seated. Effects of the predisposition against women combat leaders compound over time. After a few years, and often sooner, each infantry soldier moves from rifleman in a fire team to team leader, then squad leader. Each of these leaders must have the confidence and the followership of subordinates. Failure to obtain that obedience is bound to have a negative affect on the mission, and consequently on the progression of the leader through the ranks. The leader fails, and the unit fails. Organizational effectiveness breaks down. The obvious consequence of military organizational breakdown is friendly casualties. That outcome is unacceptable.

Currently, light infantry divisions are organized with two or more brigades, with headquarters designed to control up to five battalions. Usually brigades comprise two or three battalions, with four companies each.<sup>32</sup> The limited number of subordinate commands eases span of control for the higher commander. Round numbers will suffice for purposes of discussing inclusion of women into these ground combat units. A three-brigade division comprises 10,000 soldiers, including the combat, combat support, and combat service support troops. The division provides the extensive support required to maneuver the brigades with dedicated supply and maintenance units. A light infantry brigade would have fewer than two thousand soldiers. Few support troops are assigned directly to the brigades.

At the next command level down, an infantry battalion consists of 560 men assigned to four companies. Three 130-man rifle companies maneuver and fight with nine rifle squads of

nine men each. The 170-person battalion headquarters company provides medical, maintenance, supply, and personnel support to those companies. Battalion also provides direct combat support to the rifle companies with 4.2-inch heavy mortars and wire-guided heavy anti-armor missile systems. According to the Light Infantry Battalion Table of Organization and Equipment, a company organization looks like this:<sup>33</sup>



*Figure 2. Infantry Company Organization*

Early in the inclusion process, women would enter the branch at the junior enlisted and junior officer levels. Specifically, women would need to come in as rifle troops and platoon leaders at the asterisk points on the organizational chart (in Figure 2), rather than as commanders and non-commissioned officers. With the proper education and training common to all infantry

soldiers at entry level, women could fare well in the branch. To introduce inexperienced women at higher grades would place the first women at the disadvantage of not having the benefit of the full complement of infantry jobs and training which make for a more competent leader. Also, leaders who have not completed the rites of passage of basic training, Ranger School, or the follower ranks have to work much harder to establish credibility with subordinates in the branch if assigned as leaders. A branch transfer from another branch, particularly a non-combat branch, would make it exceedingly difficult for a woman to succeed in the infantry, even in time of peace.

The difference would be in infantry brigade staff specialties. Current regulations do not allow women to serve on infantry brigade staffs. Yet women could do the work at the brigade level in infantry brigades as signal and military intelligence officers. Maneuver brigade headquarters jobs are rarely so physically demanding that a woman could not do them. (The same condition is not true at battalion headquarters, where the staff officers are often located in the direct vicinity of maneuver companies, carrying their own rucksacks.) Assigning women at brigade headquarters would begin the necessary socialization that the all-male Infantry branch will need to make on the way to fully accepting women in infantry units.<sup>34</sup> While these positions are not coded infantry, the combat support nature of the duties and the proximity to the fight give the women serving in those jobs a chance to help infantrymen learn to work with women. Accessing women at brigade level and at squad level at the same time maximizes the chance that women at both levels will succeed. There is no definitive evidence that says women serve best under female leaders, but the enlisted women will have female officers to role model. The more senior women on brigade staffs need not feel like outsiders or intruders as they contribute

materially to the combat mission by providing command communication and command information for the maneuver forces which include other women. Female lieutenants could be transferred in at the same time women are added to the brigade staff. Enlisted women could begin their progress through the ranks simultaneously, creating an optimal array of women officers cross the rank spectrum. All women officers in the early stages of inclusion are burdened with the knowledge that they represent all women to those men with whom they serve anywhere in the brigade. Particularly competent women ought to be the first ambassadors to the Infantry branch. That way, successful completion of a tour in the infantry will be career enhancing for the individual officer and productive for the unit at the same time.

Despite sensitivity training, soldiers who have been in the branch would not take female leaders seriously who did not have the credentials of basic branch experience. Accordingly, the women entering the branch as lieutenants need to have completed the Infantry Officer Basic Course as a minimum. Airborne School, Air Assault School, and other skills training would provide visible and invisible benefits toward the acceptability and competence of all officers entering Infantry branch, but are particularly useful for females.

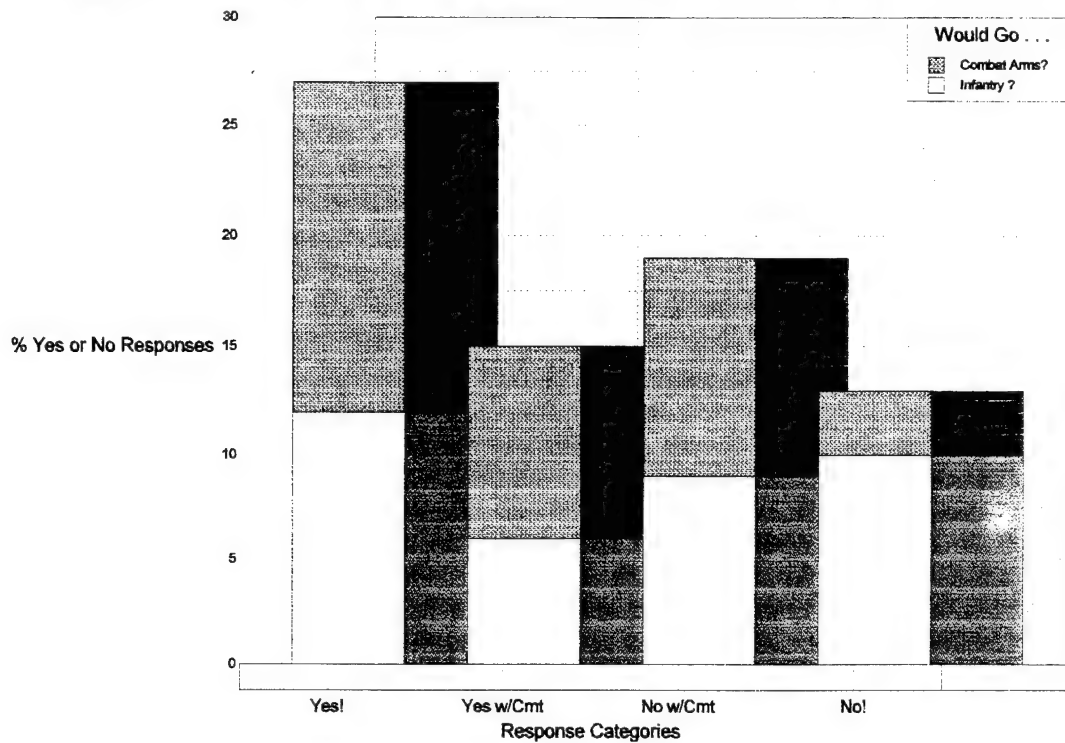
The first training goal is to have American soldiers take infantry women seriously. Women in combat should be taken seriously too, as the Germans learned on the Eastern Front in WWII. With the existence of the country at stake, Russian snipers of the all-female battalions protected the state with all the fervor and accuracy of the male soldiers. One Russian female sniper shot 309 enemy soldiers.<sup>35</sup> The U.S. need not wait until vital national interests are threatened to heighten our ability to counter those threats. The process which works toward deliberate inclusion of women into ground combat could increase national defense capability by

improving the standards for combat troops. Initiating such a process makes sense.

More recent than the WWII experiences, America invaded Panama. In 1989, at least one female military police officer made world news for being in a fire fight with hostile Panamanian defenders. Noting that occurrence in 1990, Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder of the House Armed Services Committee proposed a four-year test program. Her idea: the army was to fully integrate women into combat units. Her proposition was that the only way to see if women can handle the rigors of the combat branches was to place women in the combat branches. Representative Schroeder's bill did not make it to the floor for a vote.<sup>36</sup> National leaders can mandate that women army volunteers will be involuntarily assigned to combat duty. Greater resistance to such a mandate could begin with the women who are selected to fight in ground combat, but do not want to. Currently, little doubt remains as to whether women want to be in combat. They do. Past studies suggested that the majority of women had little desire for the ardors of the male lot.<sup>37</sup> Female attitudes in the volunteer forces have changed.

Rather than assume that the available studies are still the current truth, this analysis is augmented by a survey designed to probe the thinking of presently serving women. Surveys went to 100 percent of the eighty female U.S. Army officers in CGSC and SAMS at Fort Leavenworth. The survey was intended to assess current attitudes about service in the combat arms by those women whom the army has determined to be the most competitive for promotion and continuation in the service. Their selection for the course indicates that their records are in the upper 60 percent of the officers currently serving in the army. The sample set is neither random nor purely representative of the women in the U.S. Army in general. These women are all in their twelfth to fifteenth year of service, and are all rated near the top of the profession.

## CGSC Women Desiring Combat Arms



*Figure 3. CGSC Survey Result*

Besides the information gathered from the CGSC survey, three sources provided the base information from which the examination of female combat inclusion could be attempted. Army Regulation 600-13, dated 27 March 1992 provided Army Policy for the Assignment of Female Soldiers. The AR outlines procedures for position coding, and explains what direct combat means. That regulation and DA Pamphlet 600-3, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization, were the sources of Army policy on the employment and

progression of Army women. The 1992 document, "Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces is a months-long study yielding recommendations to the President by civilian and military persons as to the acceptable roles for service women.

Eighty-eight surveys were distributed to the female Army officers of the Leavenworth Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies. A majority of those surveyed were majors (seventy-two of eighty-eight). There were two lieutenant colonels and fourteen captains in the sample set. Six of the group were reserve officers.

The composition of the group by combat category was:

<u>Combat</u>	<u>Combat Support</u>	<u>Combat Service Support</u>
9	35	42

Combat specialties include field artillery (4), engineer (1), and aviation branches (4). In these branches, soldiers attack, defend, and maneuver. Current policy still precludes women from serving in tube artillery units--the relatively short range cannons which maneuver with armor and infantry units. Women can and do serve in the longer range missile specialties within the artillery branch. That is where these four women have been assigned. Likewise, the female engineer is in a P2 specialty within the engineer corps. She is not out with the infantry emplacing minefields while the approaching enemy is raising a dust cloud on the horizon. Still, field artillery and engineers are combat branches in the U.S. Army..

Combat supporters are often side-by-side with the fighters throughout a theater of war. Their work as signallers (9) , air defenders (1), ordnance handlers (6), intelligence collectors (11), chemical specialists (4), and military police (9) means that their involvement in battle is less as fighters than as expert supporters augmenting the efforts of the fighters. Three of these

combat support officers have transferred to the Army Acquisition Corps.

Combat service support troops focus on logistics at the tactical level. They fuel, arm, repair, and resupply the combat troops throughout the theater. If these soldiers are required to fight, the friendly situation in the field is getting desperate. In the medical services, three (3) of the sample group were army nurses and one (1) medical corps. One (1) chaplain was joined by two (2) finance officers, and four (4) lawyers from the judge advocate general corps. Twelve (12) personnel specialists from the adjutant general corps, seven (7) quartermasters, seven (7) transporters, and a single (1) SP (medical specialist) officer make up the spectrum of service supports in the 1995-96 CGSC class. The distribution of respondents was:

<u>Combat</u>	<u>Combat Support</u>	<u>Combat Service Support</u>
3	14	20

The survey posed four questions to be answered in a short essay format:

1. Would you consider joining the infantry?
2. Would you consider joining any other combat branch, such as armor or Special Forces?
3. What accommodations should the army make to include women in ground combat roles?
4. Are separate fitness standards appropriate for army men and women?

Responses are summarized and answers compiled by branch, status, and rank. The first two questions are represented on the graph, Figure 3. A majority answer to the first question--the mode, to be more precise--is that the women surveyed felt that they were deprived of training opportunities in their early careers that their male counterparts enjoyed. Now that they are more senior, the women feel, as do many men at a similar grade of rank, that they are too old to sustain the energy necessary to do the tasks of infantry. Uniformly, respondents felt that the



infantry is for young soldiers. So, as the chart indicates, eight women would join the infantry now, and three more if they had had the chance when in their youth.

The most common response to the question of whether the respondents would consider joining other combat arms was similar to question one. Personal preference would have caused different women to join different branches, but the combat arms appeal to women in the same way that they appeal to men--idiosyncratically. Individuals like what they like. A typical answer was "I was not much interested in armor branch, but Special Forces appeals to me."<sup>38</sup> The significant revelation of these data is that the women who would have joined the combat arms, and may have contributed materially to those branches, were precluded from doing so.

When asked about accommodations the Army ought to make to include women in the infantry, most of the respondents, twenty of thirty-six, replied that the one adjustment is needed: enforce a common standard for entering the branch, and a common standard for performance within the branch. Issues of hygiene and privacy were inconsequential by comparison. Important in these data is that equal treatment for equal ability is the highest order of business for the CGSC women. The narratives exposed reasons of equality of job opportunity and perceived enhanced career progression. Some women wanted to champion the cause of being first to enter a traditionally male enclave. None wanted to jeopardize combat effectiveness by lowering standards to allow less capable soldiers into the branch. A commitment to the success of the organization underpinned the responses. These professional women clearly wanted to meet the existing branch standards, or create identifiable standards. None wanted to lower entry criteria to increase the number of women in combat branches.

On the question of separate fitness standards, twenty-four of the thirty-seven women

responded that physiology dictates that separate standards remain in effect for males and females in the service. Nine respondents thought that there should be a universal standard for all soldiers--a single, gender-neutral army standard. The female officers recognize the necessity to adjust for gender difference, without compromising mission accomplishment. The physical aspects are a predominate part of a combat soldier's existence. Branch-specific tests of physical aptitude would allow for gender differences army-wide, while permitting both males and females access to those branches where they are qualified to serve. Note the desire to keep separate units from having different standards, but the branches would develop standards to assure a requisite base level of competence and capability.

The women revealed attitudes consistent with previous studies in that there was a mix of job preferences, except the CGSC group was more disposed toward service in the combat arms. The chart shows a composite of responses from the thirty-seven officers who responded--a response rate was 42 percent. Considering the propensity of women to avoid infantry duty, or to enlist at all, the survey results are exceptional. Fort Leavenworth women officers in the resident course would swell the infantry ranks by at least fourteen percent of their number, even if every person who failed to respond to the survey said no to infantry service. The army could reach deeply into that pool of talent to build the Force XXI Army.

On the question of whether the women surveyed would be willing to serve in the infantry, 21 percent of the respondents said they would be willing to serve.<sup>39</sup> 12 percent more said they would have been willing to serve if they had been given the chance when they were first accessed as lieutenants.<sup>40</sup> Together, a third of the women who responded to the survey would have volunteered for the infantry whose skills were never considered for the branch.

Three more women responded that they might consider volunteering for infantry duty under certain conditions.<sup>41</sup> These findings are decidedly different from older studies of other groups of women, both in and out of uniform.<sup>42</sup>

The women in the Fort Leavenworth study thought that separate male and female fitness standards were acceptable. Sixteen of the respondents suggested that branch-particular physical standards were reasonable and workable. Collectively, the officers polled wanted to preserve the combat effectiveness of the army, without losing the opportunity for capable women to serve successfully in the infantry. On the question of whether the army should make accommodations to allow infantrywomen, a few (six) wanted to see privacy measures installed, but nothing more.<sup>43</sup>

Judging by their acceptance to CGSC, these women are successful officers, and do not represent the broad range of women and motivations in the whole army. For example, the survey was not extended to enlisted women, or women officers not selected for resident field grade officer schooling. Prior studies of larger populations including enlisted and civilian women do not address women's preferences for joining the infantry, but show that the propensity for women to enlist for any type of military service is dropping.<sup>44</sup> Enlistment-age women sixteen to twenty-one years old are opting for non-military careers more and more often.<sup>45</sup> This is true even after the first enlistment.<sup>46</sup> However, those women who do join the service are more open to serving in direct combat than in years past. Evidently the context has changed in the minds of those women who are the subject of exclusion policies.

I have suggested that there is a transition in the political, military, and individual soldier attitudes about women in ground combat. It is not surprising, then, that the societal context for

excluding women from combat is also changing. National Opinion Research Center out of Chicago polled Americans in 1982, asking which military jobs should be open to women. 35 percent of those polled responded that women fighting in hand-to-hand combat was agreeable to them.<sup>47</sup> Consider the ten women soldiers who were killed by hostile fire in Operation Desert Storm, and the two who were captured.<sup>48</sup> Their deaths and captivity did not bring overwhelming protests from the American public. The idea that loss of life is more tragic because the person is either male or female may no longer be valid, especially when the persons are volunteer soldiers. It could be that societal resistance to women in ground combat (which did not occur in ODS) may already have been overcome. We know for sure that national attitudes are fickle--tough to pin down. With respect to women in the armed forces, judicial opinion is unclear, attitudes in Congress are at odds<sup>49</sup>, and the services interpret the rules with a degree of apparent independence.

The Army does its part to integrate women, but is in no hurry to include them in ground combat specialties. Recruiting command appeals to women, but not on the basis of joining a warrior class. Opening the infantry to women, if the CGSC survey results are suggestive of a larger reality, would increase the volume of women volunteers for that branch and for the army. Increasing the volume should also raise the number of women who can meet the minimum physical requirements for success in the branch. We already know that increasing women volunteers would improve the quality of the Army in terms of education level attained and intellectual aptitude as measured by the Vocational Battery.<sup>50</sup> It is possible that integrating women into the infantry might raise not only the average level of education, but also might improve the combat effectiveness of infantry units overall.

Whether there is a need to access combat soldiers from the female population is arguable. That soldiers ought to come from the most capable talent pools the army can find is obvious, as is the truth that human talent is distributed among males and females. If there is a chance that combat readiness can be increased by including women in the infantry, that chance ought to be explored. A coherent army policy might include definable criteria for branch entry, so that fewer challenges to the equity of the system arise. Equality is achieved, and readiness maximized.

Screening criteria need not be subjective or gender based. Empirical sampling suggests objective infantry branch entry minimums. For example, the Royal Canadian Army established a combat efficiency test which the Americans might use as a starting point for U.S. infantry soldiers. The test involved marching, jumping, climbing, and carrying over prescribed distances with a prescribed load.<sup>51</sup> Soldiers should be able to attain and sustain the standard in order to serve in particular infantry niches. Within the specialty known as Infantry are light infantry, airborne, and mechanized infantry. Special Forces troops generally come from the infantry, as do the Rangers. At times they have been motorized and even bicycle-mounted infantry. Currently, the U.S. Infantry branch managers like to tout these varied forces as "One Infantry." Distinguishing among requirements for "One Infantry" with various internal specialties is, however, necessary. The distinction is useful because the army may not want to eliminate the older, more experienced and knowledgeable soldiers expressly because they cannot meet a demanding physical standard. The army needs senior non-commissioned officers and officers who are immensely valuable for their practical knowledge long after they can carry a rucksack as they did at the time of accession as privates and lieutenants.

The Army ought to make the overt effort to catalog and waive those persons who are of value for what they know, unlike the current system where senior soldiers who are valued for their experience are subjectively, and at times arbitrarily, exempted from meeting even the height and weight requirements that junior soldiers are eliminated for failing to meet. In our system of government, civilian law makers will be the final arbiters of the debate on women in combat. The Army has a chance to weigh in early to help the civilian leadership decide just how women could be selected and used in ground fighting.

The selection process need not be complicated. For its screening, the Canadian Army requires a soldier to run ten miles with a weapon and gear in two hours and thirty minutes. That same soldier must run another ten miles in 2:45 the next day. The candidate must be able to jump a six-foot ditch, scale a six foot wall, and carry a person of equal weight one hundred meters.<sup>52</sup> Such tasks are reasonable and imitate or approximate routine infantry chores. The tasks could form the basis for an American physical testing battery to screen infantry soldiers. It seems reasonable that infantry soldiers should be able to dig fighting positions, too. Artillery is still the biggest killer on the battlefield, and dirt is still the most readily available barrier against fires. Most units have to assume the defense for part of any campaign, and any extended halt requires preparation of individual defenses. That means digging. A shoulder-depth fighting position to accommodate two troops could be part of the screening for branch qualification. A single place foxhole would work just as well for qualifying. Unfortunately, when the Canadian military planners sought to use the female polity's enthusiasm for equality to help build their armed forces in 1988, no women volunteered for the combat arms specialties.<sup>53</sup> Six dozen women were eventually selected for infantry training. Half the women entered the training

program, and seven graduated. As of 1988, only one of the three who accepted commissions in the Canadian Infantry remained. She was considering quitting for lack of female companionship.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, and most importantly, at least some aspect of a soldier's ability to fight ought to be assessed. One psychological aspect worth noting is that men are well-documented as having the tendency to harm another, a quality that the infantry exploits in times of conflict. Male aggression does not relate directly to initiative or assertiveness, just in the willingness to cause harm. That trait in men is useful in conventional conflict. Perhaps the inherent aggressiveness is less valuable in the more subtle demonstrations of power required in peace-keeping, humanitarian efforts, and disaster relief. Women, with a measurable advantage in intellectual ability and less aggression, may be able to accomplish more in OOTW environments than their male counterparts. Where host nation and non-governmental agencies are involved, the dependent, easy going female characteristics<sup>55</sup> could foster greater efficiencies than men are able to produce in the same amount of time. Character traits need not be tested as part of entry criteria for infantry, but they can be put to best use once the soldiers make the cut to join the branch if leaders recognize the availability of innate tendencies.

In the past, bayonet training, pugil stick fighting, and hand-to-hand combat have been part of the infantry soldier's training. Although allowing the enemy to close within bayonet range is generally undesirable in conventional war, face-to-face contact with the enemy is increasingly likely in the more common Other-Than-War (OOTW) scenarios the U.S. military is regularly involved in. The idea of having a competent hand-to-hand capability ensures that the full range of engagement options is available to the commander and his subordinates at each

encounter. That is, a soldier in a peace-keeping environment needs to emphasize restraint. Rules of Engagement (ROE) usually dictate a minimum of force to control a detainee. If an armed soldier starts with voice commands, then escalates to physical restraint, that troop may not need to discharge a firearm to eliminate a potential threat. If that same troop comes upon a threat without the physical strength or combative skills to wrestle, throw, or otherwise subdue or intimidate the attacker, the remaining option might be to open fire. Excessive force violates the rule of restraint, and can compromise the mission unnecessarily. Considering the impact of killing civilians that the soldiers are trying to protect and whose trust they are trying to earn, the consequences are more than tactically damaging. Without appearing extreme it is easy to see how the nearly instantaneous transmission of the act to the American and international public via the media assures a strategic impact of excessively violent individual acts. In a democracy public outcry affects national policy. Given the increasing number of missions requiring less than full application of military power, and given the increased dispersal and decentralized execution of OOTW missions, individual soldiers must be possessed of the skills which allow a full range of response options to potential threats to life and limb. Physical presence and physical strength are substantial components of the non-firing range of responses. Thus, a combative component should perhaps be a part of the qualification skills for the modern infantry soldier.

Once infantry branch standards are established, they must be enforced. Remaining branch qualified might require semi-annual testing, a la the current semi-annual physical fitness test. Running ten miles, jumping six-foot ditches, and carrying one's body weight could be added to the existing marksmanship and other requisite infantry skills tested under current



policy. Exceptions to retain essential leaders or to maintain particularly skilled soldiers could be based on age or position code. In the discretion of the major commander could reside legitimate authority for retention, albeit potentially more subjective. The objective is to maximize combat (and other-than-combat) effectiveness. Any subjectivity on the part of the major command ought to be based upon the qualifications and merits of the soldiers with respect to the needs of the service. Such standards would be consistent with the selection of soldiers entering Infantry branch in the first place. The biggest change would be the elimination of gender as a screening criteria. Qualified male and female soldiers would be filling positions from squad to brigade staff. Exceptionally qualified soldiers, of both sexes, might be retained for duty even if some aspect of qualification was not met. Establishing those qualification standards is the subject for another study.

By initial screening and subsequent training, the number one obstacle to women in the infantry can be reduced. The obstacle is a documented strength disparity between male and female soldiers. Reducing that obstacle does not need to mean a reduction in combat capability, but should mean an *increase* in combat unit effectiveness. The proposals do not mean that all women, or all men, would automatically be allowed into Infantry branch. In fact, many persons of both sexes desiring service in the infantry would probably be denied that opportunity. Ultimately, creating standards which lead to placing the best-qualified people in the right jobs for optimal service to the nation will be the objective of Infantry branch discriminators.

With respect to the second greatest challenge facing women in the infantry, moderating soldier attitudes, short term solutions do not apply. Expectations which color attitudes and perceptions derive from years of conditioning. Re-educating soldiers to adjust to women as

combat leaders could take years, barring introduction of some revolutionary method of psychological interdiction. A lifetime of socialized values cannot be readily reversed, especially the traditional cultural value which poses men as the fighters, and women as noncombatants. Fortunately, attitudes, which are manifested as behaviors, are learned. To begin the evolutionary shift in thinking toward acceptance, the U.S. Army can expand sensitivity and human relations training to make all soldiers more aware of counterproductive preconceptions about women leaders. By foregrounding the preconceptions, and foiling them with examples of effective female leadership, the inherent resistance to women leading combat units can begin to dissolve.

Implementation of training could be in the chain teaching mode already common in the U.S. Army. Army national leadership decides the content and how acceptance training should proceed. The Chief of Staff, and perhaps the Army Secretary, announce the policy, and then pass on the principles to be trained to major subordinate commanders. Those commanders teach their subordinate leaders the lessons and policies until each soldier has heard the message from a person in the chain of command. Leaders would need to be first to genuinely accept women in combat leadership roles, then model that acceptance for their subordinates.

Leaders need to acknowledge that attitudes toward leadership may have little to do with an individual's ability to lead<sup>56</sup> Even a high performance leader faces the cumulative effects conditioning on the perceptions of the led. In peacetime, Army women face a bias against their leadership that Army men do not. The bias can be in the form of protectionism, preferential treatment, or hostility. None of these behaviors associated with the bias are useful to the unit. Because American women are barred from combat, no data exist for comparison to see if that negative bias exists in time of war. It likely does.

Researchers Savell and Collins measured sex-role attitudes in an Army study in 1975 to determine the level of acceptance of women as peacetime leaders. The researchers recognized that they could only provide a snapshot of the contemporary attitudes. They suggested that the attitudes could change over time, and that longitudinal studies would measure that change. The snapshot at that time was clear. Neither men nor women readily accept female combat leaders. They are culturally predisposed against it. Because respondents with more traditional sex-role attitudes showed less acceptance of egalitarian positions for women in the Army in peace, we can expect those attitudes to hold when the fighting starts.<sup>57</sup> The consequence of that lack of acceptance is the loss of organizational effectiveness. In the smaller army of the nineties, more efficiency is required, not less.

Including qualified women in every aspect of military work might be the way to greater efficiencies. Early research on the integration of women into ground combat generated optimism that ready solutions existed to overcome mechanical and physical aspects of inclusion. Socially, it makes sense after a superficial look that a mental obstacle erected by males was blocking full utilization of Army women. Assumptions about obdurate men turn out to be false: stubborn resistance of male leaders is not the main reason that America keeps women out of combat specialties. Among other reasons, genuine physical limitations and a prevailing cross-gender cultural bias against women warriors are blocking policy change in the Army.

If the President orders female integration for political reasons, gaining acceptance of men (and women) for females in combat specialties will run a course similar to the integration of Blacks from the late 1940s to the present. Adjusting soldier's attitudes is a challenge for leadership, and in the case of the Army, it is a matter of giving the order to integrate and then

supervising implementation. But actual reasons for combat exclusion are both more substantial and more numerous than they first appeared. A short list of ready solutions for the physical and intellectual problems is insufficient--strength disparity, failed mixed-gender cohesion, and a lack of killer instinct in women are not readily or simply resolved. At the beginning of this study, the solution to full integration of women into the ground combat fight simply meant all female units, and some male-female buddy teams. But personnel management solutions were too limited to address the array of existing challenges.

Even for those problems correctly identified, solutions were elusive. For example, the current truth is that bionic exoskeletons to amplify muscular strength have been tried. Their use is in the distant future; such machines are too clumsy and too expensive, now. With adequate reserves of male muscle power, there is no incentive to carry on the research to perfect the technology of a bio-mechanical solution. As world-class athletes and power-lifters can attest, medical alternatives do exist. Athletes have shown that steroids and blood doping can significantly improve physical output. But introducing growth hormones to increase the strength and mass of young women to make them competitive with males not only interferes with natural biological processes, the practice upsets certain ethical standards as well, given what we know for sure about harmful side effects.

On the second point, female-only units are separate but not equal. The Women's Army Corps will not likely be resurrected. At their inception, female units were auxiliary units which freed more men from administrative and maintenance tasks to go do the hard fighting. reintroducing women-only units to perform as combat units does not make sense given the data we have on the comparative lack of strength and endurance women possess vis-a-vis men. No

responsible leader would knowingly send a subordinate unit into an obvious losing mismatch.

Lastly, male-female buddy teams of varying numbers have the perennial risks of sexual harassment and sexual intimacy, neither of which mesh well with the military duty of soldiers in combat. An equal fifty-fifty mix of women to men tips the unit physical capabilities scale too far; one man cannot compensate for strength limitations of a female partner without a corresponding sacrifice in the collective endurance of the whole unit. And, if cohesion is defined in part as meeting all standards of performance and behavior in order not to threaten group survival, cohesion suffers in mixed-gender units.<sup>58</sup> Current estimates from Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Jackson are that going beyond a ratio of eight to ten percent women noticeably degrades mission accomplishment where strength is a factor. However, if a minimum strength standard is set, no limit need be placed on the number of women entering the branch.

Without a strength screening, the disparity in physical capability carries a liability for the women who would be seen as less than equal to the men.<sup>59</sup> In post-Persian Gulf experience, gender was not a factor in the definition of cohesion. Interpersonal bonding is clearly not exclusive to males. The crisis of imminent danger due to wartime deployment meant that bonding could be as effective in mixed-gender units as in single gender units. Some perceived the bonding to be better in mixed units.<sup>60</sup>

Women can serve in near-combat positions right now. The way an infantry brigade echelons for combat already places women in support roles side-by-side with infantry troops in brigade support areas in the field. Signal troops, mechanics, cooks and myriad other supporters all have the a self-defense role in their rear areas because of the infiltration and vertical envelopment threat. Women from the division support elements previously mentioned already

sustain the maneuver brigades from " rear" locations proximate to men in duty positions closed to those women. In effect, women are already serving in high-threat areas. The Army need only acknowledge this fact in writing to begin the transition to full inclusion. Women want the policy adjustment. The policy adjustment would merely codify the current reality.

A scenario based upon available testimony and precedent would occur this way: probably, the U.S. Government's decision to integrate women into the infantry will be in the form of a mandate to integrate at once. There will likely not be any easing into the ranks, because sufficient numbers have to be assessed in order to grow future female leaders for each grade. A quota will therefore have to be set. The number of women who can perform the physical tasks of the infantry and who volunteer to join rifle platoons will probably be too small at first. The inability to maintain the set quota with volunteer women will cause females to be ordered into the branch. Recall that aviation branch can already give that order to women pilots.

Women who are required to join the infantry without the benefit of gradual integration will have a dual liability: they may have a bad attitude about the work, which will show up in their performance, and they will probably lack the necessary physical skills to do the work of an infantry soldier, wrecking both their self-esteem and the cohesion of the unit, due to the resentment (or disdain) of the other soldiers in the unit, both male and female. That will mean a depreciation in combat efficiency of infantry units. By considering a deliberate integration plan, the U.S. Army cannot only avoid depreciation of combat units which include women, but can increase effectiveness in those units. That is, including women in the infantry too rapidly will cause a near-term failure as occurred in Canada.<sup>61</sup> Enthusiasm for infantry duty suggested by the women in the CGSC survey indicates that unlike our northern neighbors, the American

experience of integrating women into the branch would meet with success.

According to the CGSC sample, many women would value the chance to serve in the rigorous and dangerous ground combat specialties. Even so, America cannot allow women the *option* of entering combat specialties. That position would create resentment among men who do not have a choice. If both men and women have a choice, the Army risks failing to maintain minimum essential numbers of trained combat soldiers for the volume of national security missions assigned. Women may not currently be required to join the infantry or other combat specialty. No guarantees protect that status indefinitely. What the survey results indicate is that the time is right for women to be established in ground combat roles.

No laws force women in, but there is no law which keeps women out of combat jobs in the infantry, either. Soon, there may be laws requiring inclusion on terms which will satisfy neither the military planner nor the lawmakers generating the mandate. Failure to effectively include infantrypersons in the ground combat ranks won't be because integration can't be done, but because the urgency of policy will interfere with an effective accession of an appropriate number of women. The number will not be numerically representative of the population at large, nor of the population of females in uniform. If there are not enough women to enter all infantry units, research suggests that all-male units will become increasingly chauvinistic. Units with very few women will demonstrate heightened, stereotypical sex-role awareness, resulting in the biased behavior noted earlier. That includes rejecting women as colleagues for a time.<sup>62</sup> When enough women are finally integrated into Infantry branch, the organization will evolve into an unpredictable combination of people and emotions. If the warrior rite of passage, the arduous training and duties of infantry soldiers, is not negatively altered by the inclusion of

women, then the membership in elite units might carry an improved reputation. If the women break down the male bonds, which could happen simply because of their presence, and not due to any overt acts, then rebuilding effective infantry fighting units might be a challenge for years to come.

In the end, the U.S. Army will have women in infantry squads, and the policy makers will have accomplished their goal. It makes sense that including women in infantry squads should occur at a measured pace on a deliberate program. The price of immediacy will be a degraded combat force lacking in cohesion. When called to action, that infantry rapidly assembled squad will perform to the best of its ability. It is that future ability the Army needs to attend to. Army infantry needs to maximize potential capability now by planning for the inclusion of women in ground roles. Until the gender-inclusive infantry closes with the enemy, however, the true effect of integrating will remain speculative. Women will alter the dynamics and affect the performance of any infantry unit. The Army has the means now to examine the effectiveness of infantrywomen in peace time. Prepare for change. Waiting for the civilian leadership to compel a method and time line for inclusion is too much of a gamble.



## Appendix A: CGSC Women's Survey

Dear

I am a student in the Advanced Military Studies Program (SAMS). As part of my research on women in combat, I would like your help figuring out how professional women feel about the prospects of women serving in infantry units. My working thesis asks what preparations the U.S. Army can make to include women in U.S. Army Infantry brigades.

Would you be willing to respond to the four questions I have attached to help me understand your views on this topic? Some of your peers have already indicated that they would like to meet in a group to hear what other women have to say about combat and related subjects. We can certainly do that. If you would please respond to each of the questions briefly, then fold the letter in half and drop it in distribution, that would be a great help. I will press on with the rest of my study, since the suspense for this project is drawing nigh.

Thanks for taking time with this. I'll gladly show you what comes of it.

Sincerely,

Les Knotts  
Major, Infantry

1. Would you be willing to serve in the Infantry if that specialty were open to women?
2. Are there other combat roles you would be willing to fill, such as Special Forces, Armor, or the closed MOS's in the Artillery or Engineer branches?
3. What accommodations would you expect the Army to make to allow women to serve in the Infantry?
4. Are separate physical standards for men and women in the service appropriate and acceptable?

## **Appendix B: CGSC Women's Survey Results**

This survey represents an empirical sampling of a small set of serving women officers to determine current attitudes about including females in Infantry branch. The four short answer questions recorded responses from thirty-seven of ninety-two uniformed Army women in the 1995-96 Command and General Staff College class. The paper survey was distributed to individual message boxes. After writing short answers to four questions, the respondent was to fold the survey and return it to me via local distribution. Thirty-seven officers responded, although many chose to deliver the surveys themselves.

Demographic composition of the sample set was nine combat officers, thirty-five combat support officers, and forty-four combat service support officers. No males were surveyed. Eighty-two are active duty, six were reservists. In the group were fourteen captains, seventy-two majors and two lieutenant colonels.

The following compilation summarizes the responses by number and by comment. I used the most common ides in each category as the mode of response, and included additional comments which merited note. What is not characterized here is the number of respondents enthused enough about the subject of women in ground combat who were enthused enough to call for meetings, visit and call my home, come to explain their positions more fully at work, and annotated their responses with phone numbers and addresses to continue the discussion. A third of those who responded (fourteen of thirty-seven) wanted to clarify positions or continue the discussion.

### **Question 1: Would you be willing to serve in the Infantry if that specialty were open to women?**

Seven YES respondents offered no conditions; they wanted to serve as infantry officers. Four conditional YES responses included comments about a willingness in youth to join the ground combatants that passed with age. Others were concerned with the equality of conditions of service--at least for having the option to serve in any capacity that men can, to include accepting a potentially higher level of life risk.

### **Question 2: Are there other combat roles you would be willing to fill such as Special Forces, Armor, or the closed MOS's in the Artillery or Engineer branches?**

Twenty officers answered YES, indicating a willingness to serve in non-infantry combat jobs. Women felt qualified but denied.

Four more officers caveated their YES answer by saying that as lieutenants they would have been willing to go into a combat branch, but were too old, or too far behind their contemporaries to be successful after a branch transfer at the field grade level.

Of particular note was the volume of addendum suggesting women would fare well in Special Forces operations. Ten of those persons surveyed recommended that the Army take advantage of women's potential in SF.

**Question 3: What Accommodations would you expect the Army to make to allow women to serve in the Infantry?**

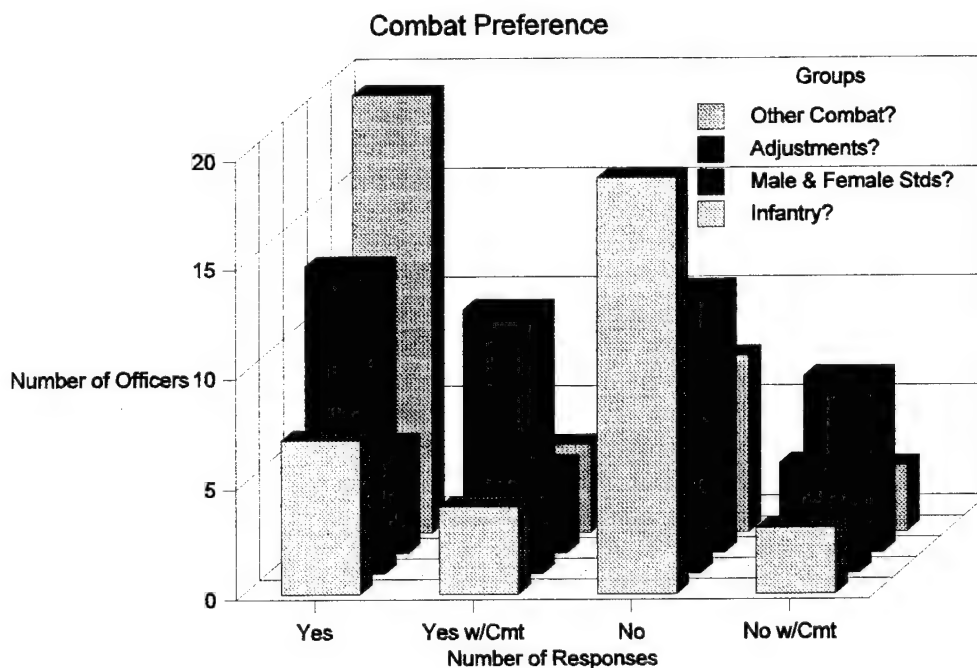
The mode response, indicated by twenty of the thirty-seven respondents, was NO ACCOMMODATION at all, just ensure that ALL SOLDIERS MEET THE SAME BRANCH STANDARDS. That implies that there would be a branch standard for physically qualified, and well as mental aptitude minimums. Such standards are not yet policy in the infantry. The other responses asked for PRIVACY in the form of gender separate living quarters and latrines (eight).

**Question 4: Are separate physical standards for men and women in the service appropriate and acceptable?**

The bulk of respondents (24) stated that NO SEPARATE STANDARD would benefit the Army. Nine other officers thought that physiological differences should be accounted for, but that performance standards on the Army Physical Fitness Test were not challenging to most women, and that those standards needed to be higher.

Many (17) noted that the Army entrance standard could be gender-adjusted, but branch-specific standards should be absolute.

## CGSC Survey Summary



## ENDNOTES

1. TRADOC Historical Summary : Fiscal Year 1982. p. 58.
2. March 1992 AR 600-13, p. 8.
3. Kenneth R. Harrison in "Effects of Assigning Women Officers to Army Combat Units," p.6.
4. This is the Army's formal definition of direct combat as found in the March 1992 AR 600-13, p.8.
5. P1-P7 DCPC comes from AR 600-13, 27 March 1992. The former P1 though P7 system of 1989 appears to have been superseded by the simpler 1992 P1/P2 system of exclusion/inclusion.
6. DA Pam 600-3, June 1995, pp.31-31.
7. Kenneth Harrison in "The Effect of Assigning Female Officers to Army Combat Units," p.1, and "Combat Exclusion Policy." pp. 1-4.
8. The Code of Conduct for POWs is widely distributed on credit-card size laminated handouts to soldiers. Some basic training units require soldiers to memorize the entire Code. The idea is to internalize standards of professional military behavior in an arena where the soldier may have no other reference or support.
9. 16 October, 1995 telephone conversation with Ben McWilliams, Plans and Operations Specialist in the 1st Engineer Brigade at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Home of the Engineer Basic Course. (314)-596-1489.
10. Army policy approved by CSA Gordon Sullivan, as amended on 29 July, 1994.
11. Leadership Development Office Memorandum, dated 26 August 1994. SUBJECT: FY95 Training Floors for Women in Attack Aircraft. P.1.
12. McDonald, K. "Women in Combat--When the Best Man for the Job is A Woman." '91. p.4.
13. A CGSC Artillery officer explained how she was recruited several years ago to leave the Army and attend such training with other women in government service who had already been through, or were currently attending the Army Special Forces Qualification Course. Interview on October 12, 1995 at Fort Leavenworth.
14. DeBenedetto Basic Training study at FT Jackson, MS, 1989. COL DeBenedetto noted a 56% advantage for males in upper body strength .
15. The July 1993 GAO Report to the Secretary of Defense (p. 3) cites teamwork among soldiers as a way to distribute the physical work to accomplish required tasks. The report does

not address, in the same section, the consequences of perceived inability of some soldiers to perform their fair share of physical labor on the cohesiveness of the units studies.

16. From comments on thirty percent of surveys returned from the Army women in the 1995-96 CGSC class.

17. Taken from 1993 West Point Application packet I used when working with USMA field recruiting force.

18. Blacksmith, Women in the Military. P. 49.

19. Military Medicine, Vol 154, May 1989. COL Margarete DeBenedetto.

20. Mark Foley in "Attitudes Toward Women . . ." cites an anthropometric and body composition 1976 study by James A. Peterson of West Point cadets which revealed that women have less bone mass, less muscle, and more fat. Men have longer legs and greater ventilation capacity. Thus, men perform far better than women in activities which require strength, speed, and power. pp. 27-30.

21. Mission Training Plan for Infantry, ARTEP Manual, 1992.

22. Mark Foley points out that at levels below maximum exertion, women are always operating at a level closer to their maximum in order to accomplish the same amount of work. P.30.

23. 11 October, 1995 conversation with Mr. Ben McWilliams, training manager at Fort Leonard Wood.

24. Holly P. Martin in "The Integration of Women into the Military: A Preliminary Investigation of Relevant Factors." Page 5.

25. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results.

26. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results.

27. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results.

28. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results.

29. Taken from a personal interview with a female SFC commenting on her own experiences in the U.S. Army from 1972 to 1990. Recounted in Women in the Military, edited by E.A. Blacksmith, vol 64, #5, H.W. Wilson Company, 1992. p. 47.

30. Mark Foley citing Binkin and Bach in "attitudes Toward women as Leaders in the Military," a doctoral dissertation. p. 3.

31. Mark Foley in doctoral dissertation "Attitudes Toward Women as Leaders in the Military," p.4.
32. Table of Organization and Equipment 07015L-CTH, dated October 1990.
33. DA Table of Organization and Equipment 07015L-CTH for Light Infantry Battalions, October 1990.
34. From Kenneth Harrison's "The Effect of Assigning Female Officers to Army Combat Units," pp. 20-21 & 25-26.
35. The Soviet Army of WWII is the only historical example of women fighting as part of an organized standing army. Conscription of women resulted after the huge losses inflicted on the Russians by the Germans in the summer of 1941. Sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko earned the Order of Lenin for killing 309 Germans. P. 18, Alderman's "Women in Direct Combat . . . ."
36. K. Harrison in "Assigning Female Officers," p.16. "Women Under Fire [Persian Gulf]," *Ladies Home Journal*, December 1990, p.
37. "An Analysis of Occupational Choice," p. xx.
38. See Appendix A, CGSC Women's Survey Results.
39. Appendix A, CGSC Survey results.
40. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results
41. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results
42. Not only were the women willing to join the infantry, they were vocal about just how they might go about it. I had survey respondents corner me in the hallway, call my home, ask for meetings, and come by my house on the weekend to discuss and clarify their positions. They are remarkably passionate about the subject.
43. See Appendix A, CGSC Survey Results
44. Secretary of Defense Annual Report to Congress, dated February 1995. Table G-18, and pages G-3 through G-5. Declining military, base closures, and a decrease in recruiting expenditures all contribute to the reduction.  
Also page 190 of "Procurement of Women for the Armed Forces . . . ." by Kate Avery.
45. From 1991 to 1993, a Youth Attitudes Tracking Study showed a drop from thirteen to eleven percent overall. The percentage is much larger for Black females, dropping from a twenty-four percent propensity to twenty percent. Appendix G-23 of the *Annual Report to the President and Congress, 1995*.

46. From Holly P. Martin's 1987 dissertation "Integration of Women into the Military." Women soldiers report lower job satisfaction than their male counterparts--lower self-esteem, too. p. 89.
47. From "Women in Combat: The Policy Aspect," page 15.
48. Women in the Military, E.A. Blacksmith. p. 106.
49. Women in the Military, Binkin and Bach, p. 52.
50. According to Binkin and Bach, women must possess a high school degree or equivalent and score at the 59th percentile on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery in the area of general aptitude, while men need not have the diploma, and those men may score in the 31st percentile to be acceptable in terms of general aptitude (as measured by the ASVAB). p. 75.
51. Kelly John Ward cites the Canadian example in "Women in Armor and Cavalry" in the November-December 1992 *Armor Magazine*, page 46.
52. CAPT Kelly Ward, "Women in the Armor and Cavalry," November-December 1992 Armor Magazine, p. 46.
53. Page 16 of "Women in Combat: The Operational Impact . . ."
60. "Attitudes Toward Women as Leaders in the Military . . ." pp.39-40.
54. Field Test of Women in Combat Specialties (CREW) in D'Amico's "Women at War . . ." [Minerva V: 2 (Summer 1987): 20].
55. Foley, pp. 32-33.
56. Mark Foley in "Attitudes Toward Women Leaders in the Military" explains that situation, environment, and background of leaders and led influence attitudes as much as performance.
57. Foley, pp. 6-7.
58. 1992 Presidential commission on the assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, page C-80 defines cohesion as a relationship of common and shared values and experiences, conformity to group norms to ensure group survival, loss of personal identity in favor of group identity, focussing on group attitudes and goals, total dependence on the group for mission or survival, and meeting standards of performance and behavior in order to preserve the group.
59. From a telephone conversation with the training manager at Ft. Leonard Wood, who won't put more than six women in a bridge platoon of sixty soldiers at One Station Unit Training for Engineer Bridge training. In his own words, they are just not strong enough to move the materials. The Ft Jackson TRADOC study compared strength and fitness of 100 female and seventy-five male soldiers entering basic training with their performance after three weeks of

physical and psychological training.

60. "Women in the Military: Deployment During the Persian Gulf War," page 40.

61. Page 56 in "Women at War: Personnel Policies of State Militaries." Canada followed the five-year Dutch experiment to include women in combat specialties. Hoping to capitalize on women's demands for equal rights, military planners were disappointed that no women volunteered for combat training.



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